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To:

Express Ads

WANTED: Railroad dining car silverware, china, glassware, serving pieces, trays, etc. Buy only, no trades. No menus. S. Schiechl, 25 Cervantes Blvd, San Francisco, CA 94123.

ALWAYS WANT railroad china, linen, silver, etc., for my private collection. Also wax sealers, dater dies, and anything from the 20th Century Limited. I have a few select PRR and NYC calendars for sale and trade. Write: R. B. Shull, 130 W. 44th St., New York City, NY 10036.

RAIL EXCURSION Sept. 11, 1971: Penn Central Railroad, covering the lines from Boston, Mass. to Mansfield, Framingham, Lowell, Framingham, Fitchburg, Franklin, Milford and return to Boston via the Midland. Coming in Oct. on the Boston & Maine Railroad: Boston, Mass. to Lincoln, New Hampshire. For these excursions, write RAILROAD ENTHUSIASTS INC., PO Box 136-RT, Ward Hill, Mass. 01830.

EURAILPASS PRICES will rise January 1. Your own pass at present prices is as close as your mailbox. Just send your check and passport number to: Jean Maxwell, Box 4, c/o this newsletter. Guaranteed fast, reliable service. You can use pass anytime, length of use starts from your first ride. Prices for unlimited 1st class in 13 countries: $110 3 weeks, $140 1 mo., $200 2 mos., $230 3 mos. Half-fare ages 4-10. Must be purchased in U.S. Write now! (Telephone 415-343-1073.)

EXPRESS ADS cost just $1.00 (minimum) for up to 3 lines. Extra lines 35¢ each, 3/$1. Line is 56 spaces. Send your message in now and watch it go out FAST to RTN subscribers. Write: Message Media, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RAIL TRAVEL newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 17
August 2, 1971

Nixon Calls Meeting on Rail Strike

Rail Strike

Railroad Strike

800 Trains Still Idle In SP Strike

Rail Tieup

Rail Talks Break Off--

RAIL STRIKE SHUTS TWO MORE LINES; FOUR NOW HALTED

Railroad Strike 'Endangers State'

SP Strike

Train Strike Spreads to Six More Railroads

No Trains For Peninsula Commuters

Rail Strike Ends

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THIS ABBREVIATED vacation edition of Rail Travel Newsletter is due to the staff's absence for one week. The next issue, dated August 16, will be the normal size and will also be mailed later than usual. A normal mailing schedule will be resumed about the end of September, as our printer also will be absent for a time during the coming month.

Next issue will resume Paul Rayton's series of train reports from his forthcoming book. SCL's SILVER STAR will be the next train featured.

EDITORIAL
WHAT I DID ON MY VACATION

Sonic booms over the High Sierra was the last thing I'd expected, but there they were to mar the tranquillity of a high altitude lake nestled among snow-flecked crags--a reminder that it's becoming next to impossible to escape from "civilization."

A couple thousand feet lower--7000 to 8000--it was the persistent racket of motor boats and motor bikes, the faint odor of gasoline in a blue Sierran lake, the discarded soft drink can opener on a rugged wilderness trail.

We'd come to this place accessible only by private motor vehicle, crossing and re-crossing railroad tracks closed by the strike, to get away from it all for a week. We discovered it's possible to do so only for brief periods of time when the pollution of society isn't intruding.

Another inescapable fact presented itself: Drivers (at least California drivers) are getting steadily worse. On a two-lane highway, cars veering over the center line are more the rule than the exception. Once you're accustomed to driving on freeways with one-way traffic, you automatically regard a broken highway line as something you can cross rather casually, not expecting oncoming traffic. You also drive a good deal faster, faster than conditions permit, when you're adapted to freeway speeds.

To preserve our sanity we must do everything reasonable to discourage every type of highway vehicle from operating in this country. It's obvious that this will require a massive increase in rail traffic, both passenger and freight. Are we up to the job?

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol 1, No 17, August 2, 1971. Published twice monthly, on the 1st and 3rd Mondays, by Message Media, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709 USA. Subscription $4 a year; 25¢ a copy. Editor: James Russell. Artist: Michael Cohen.

LETTERS

I rode on Southern and Penn Central from Alexandria, Va. to Boston the middle of June. I discovered after boarding the train that the diner didn't go thru to N.Y. (I had suspected it--PC's timetable said it didn't, Amtrak's May 1 timetable said it did, Southern had no timetables available, and the agent at Alexandria said the diner ran thru). I also had to pay $2.50 for the dubious privilege of picking out an empty seat in the Southern coach, which was not as clean as the PC ones (Amtrak has accomplished at least that). When I got home I wrote to the Southern. I got back a letter from President Graham Claytor, refunding my $2.50 (since I was not issued a seat), stating that PC and/or Amtrak do not wish to operate the diner north of Washington (they do run SCL diners), and that "Southern continues its efforts to provide a fine passenger service and with the help of friends and patrons such as yourself will correct those conditions which do not lend themselves toward that goal." I thought it was right nice of them.

I returned from the East Coast using Canadian Pacific from Mattawamkeag, Maine to Montreal; CN's Rapido to Toronto; and then the Super Continental to Edmonton; a CN RDC to Calgary and back; CN 1 to Jasper; CN 9 to Prince George; and PGE 2 to North Vancouver.

The Atlantic Limited offered a pleasant night's sleep and breakfast in a Vista-Dome coffee shop--on time all the way. CN's Rapido is fast and a bit rough. Scenery between Montreal and Toronto is flat agricultural land. The Super C immediately heads north into rolling hills, spends the next day in forests and past lakes, then crosses a lot of sparsely inhabited prairie. The RDC to Edmonton followed (alas! it was discontinued 5 days later--but CP added one) river valleys much of the way, crossing high trestles and rounding a number of sharp horseshoe curves. The sun came out just at sunset. The sight of the grain elevators in bright paint with their shadows stretching nearly to Winnipeg, and dark rain clouds, was sheer beauty. At Camrose the Calgary and Drumheller cars separated. A caterer's truck pulls up to the platform so passengers can have a bite to eat during the switching. The Montreal section of the Super C was late into Edmonton, so I rode west to Jasper on it. It lost more time, so I had the unexpected bonus of lunch and dinner on CN that day. It was still light at 9:30 when I boarded CN 9 at Jasper, and it had been light for awhile when I got off at 5:50 the next morning. PGE's 14-hr trip includes some incredible scenery and some good, if artless, tray meals. It was honest food, served hot and in good quantity. PGE is a must.

George H. Drury
San Francisco, Calif.

THE BIG RAILROAD STRIKE

"Well, I guess that's the end of it for this season," sighed the porter as he stepped off the SP CASCADE in Oakland at 8:30pm July 23. The train would not be going on to Portland and Seattle that night. A selective strike against SP and N&W would begin at 6:00 the next morning. The United Transportation Union 8 days earlier had shut down UP and SR (see RTN #16). The CASCADE was the last passenger train to run on SP lines before the strike. At 6:00am Saturday it would have been in Klamath Falls, Ore. Peninsula commute trains did not run from July 24 thru August 2. The first work day of the strike, Highway Patrol spokesmen reported commute traffic about normal, viewed from their helicopters, but drivers who actually went thru it said it was "ghastly." Greyhound put on 25 extra buses, enough to cover 10% of trainless commuters.

When UP went out earlier, a bus was substituted on its leg of the S.F.-Chicago run. With SP down, the route was broken. Only the BN daily Denver Zephyr continued to operate.

At 6:00am July 30 Santa Fe was added to the list of roads selectively struck, as well as five important but small freight-only connecting roads. The L.A.-Chicago route was thus cut off, as well as the L.A.-San Diego runs and the Chicago-Houston line.

Talks to settle the strike proceeded with difficulty. UTU President Charles Luna refused to bargain with John Hiltz, representative of the National Railway Labor Conference, so the Association of American Railroads selected 3 railroad presidents to meet with Luna. They were: Graham Claytor of SR, Benjamin Biaggini of SP, and William Moore of PC. An agreement was announced effective at noon Aug. 2, and rail operations began to return to normal.

The biggest issue at stake was that of work rules, including the railroads' proposed lengthening of crew runs. During the strike the roads still operating mostly put the wanted changes into effect. After the strike, pre-strike conditions were reinstated with the provision that individual bargaining with the various roads would take place to resolve this issue.

For San Francisco commuters it was the fifth time in a year that their trains were shut down by strikes.

AUTO-TRAIN PLANS UNDERWAY

Auto-Train Corp. hopes to have underway this Fall a nonstop round trip train between Alexandria, Va. & Disney World in Florida. It will run its own locos, dome cars and auto carriers. The line will terminate at Sanford, 37 miles from Disney World.

NARP AGAIN TAKES ISSUE WITH AMTRAK POLICY

Amtrak has stated that its expenses are running "unexpectedly high", so that it may go to Congress this Fall to request more money available to it thru the guaranteed loan provision of the legislation that created it.

The National Association of Railroad Passengers immediately reacted to this news with a reiteration of its call for Amtrak to build its own organization, hire its own employees, and run its own trains. It said it would oppose more funds for Amtrak unless these changes were made. The railroads are doing little to economize and run their operations efficiently, according to NARP, only sending their bills to Amtrak. NARP called Amtrak "little more than a shadow organization acting as a conduit for subsidy payments to the railroads."

TURBOTRAIN GOES ON NATIONWIDE TOUR

The Penn Central's Turbotrain was scheduled to begin a tour of the country starting July 22, going through the South and West to Oakland via Houston. The schedule was not available as of this writing, and whether the rail strike affected it was not known.

In October, Alan Pegler's famous Flying Scotsman is due to make a nationwide tour to celebrate British Week.

REDWOOD BUDD CAR SOLD TO OREGON TOURIST LINE

The famous Budd car No. 10 used pre-Amtrak on the Northwestern Pacific's Willits-Eureka run has been sold by SP to the Oregon, Pacific & Eastern, a small line operating out of Cottage Grove, Oregon, reports THE WESTERN RAILROADER. (See RTN No. 10.)

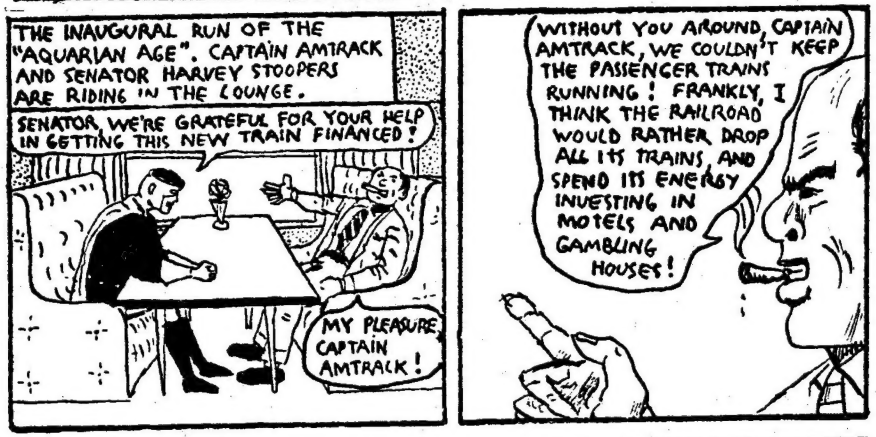
YES, VIRGINIA, THERE IS A ...

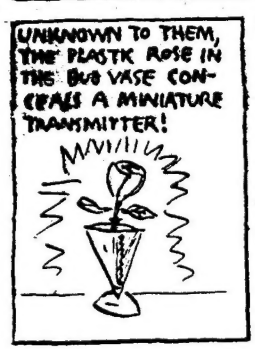
rail link still operating between the U.S. and Canada, tho you wouldn't know it from reading the Amtrak schedule. Not counting Canadian Pacific 41/42 which crosses part of Maine to reach St. John, N.B., there is the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo train 371/376, a Budd car running between Toronto & Buffalo, N.Y. Schedules show that PC train 71 from N.Y. misses it by 10 minutes (due to 40-min slowdown between Albany & Buffalo caused by bad track and slow orders, reports Steve Farrar), but Amtrak's "Empire Service" timetable says it connects, but doesn't list the times. What's happening?

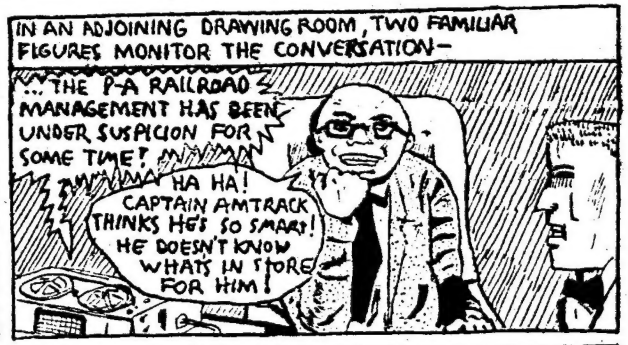
UP SLEEPERS HEADING TO PC FOR REBUILDING

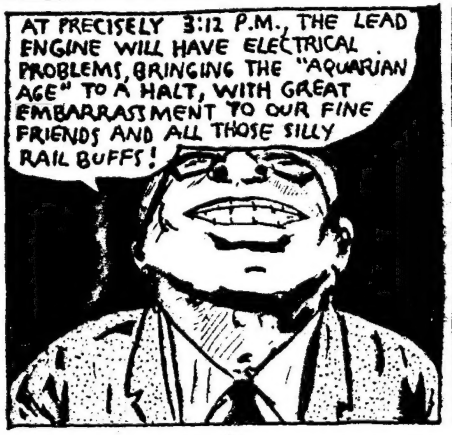
A string of Budd-built UP Pacific series sleepers was seen in July in Indianapolis, destined for PC's Beech Grove, Ind. shops for rebuilding for Amtrak. Some are already in use on Penn Central, but, reports Paul Rayton, there are still plenty of PC "junkers."

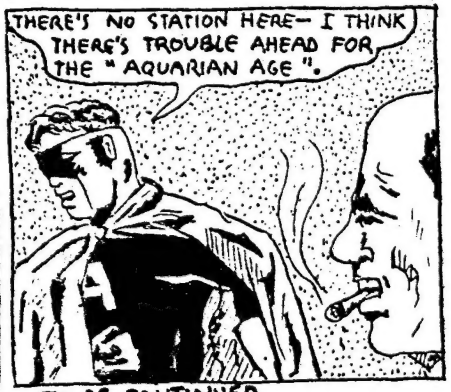
CAPTAIN AMTRACK











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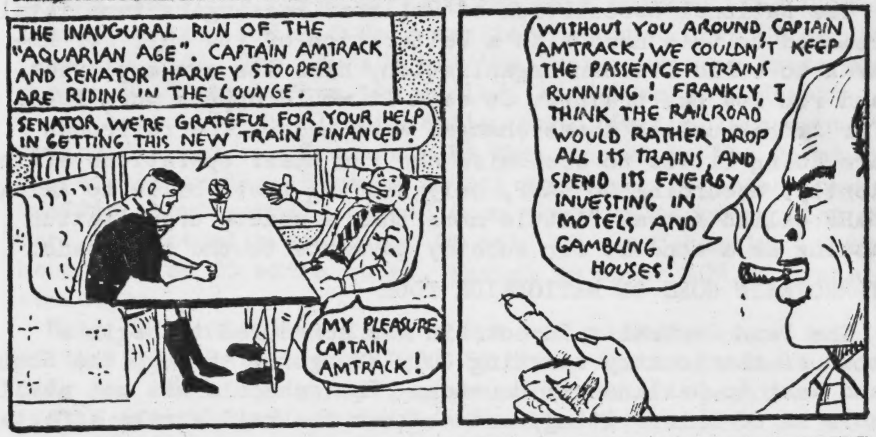

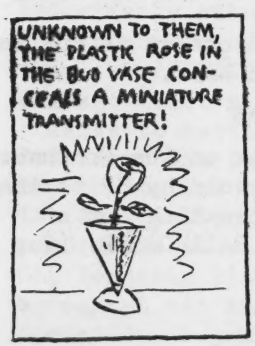

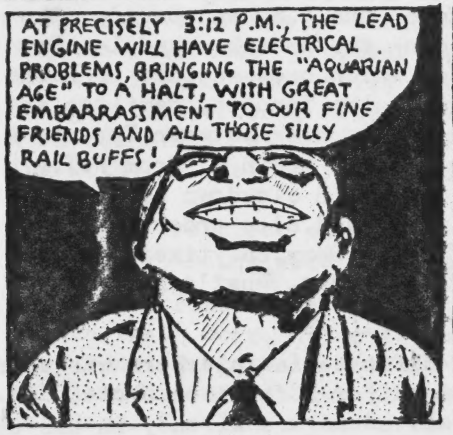

TO BE CONTINUED

Mixed Train of Thoughts

A CORRECTION from last issue: that Autumn trip from Calif. to Northwest incl. Milwaukee Road electric line is sponsored by Bay Area Electric RR Ass'n. Info from 3141 Franklin, Apt.11, San Francisco 94123... PASSENGER COUNTS are hard to come up with, but here are a few unoffieial but reliable counts made in California: CASCADE northbd. from L.A. July 4, 252 coach, 36 1st class full paid fares (others not incl.); CASCADE northbd. from Oakland July 7, 179 coach, 1st class uncounted (train had 7 coaches, 3 sleepers)... KNOWLEDGEABLE West Coast railfan recently met with Amtrak Pres. & other officials for first time, was very impressed with their enthusiasm and ideas. It's mainly a matter of how to get them implemented... AMTRAK says it does not want SP's domes and automats; only wants all stainless steel equip't. This means only SP's Budd-built cars. SP unhappy because this will up the cash anty they must make to Amtrak... THE UP STRIKE caused the DENVER ZEPHYR & CITY OF S.F. to run separately between Denver & Chicago (see last issue). Since then the two have continued to run as 2 sections, the CITY leading the DZ by ten mins out of Denver... LOOK FOR Amtrak to replace SP dome on CITY with a Budd-built dome, despite SP's protestations about clearances thru the Sierras. CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR made it thru there many times when its own route was blocked. It takes a special train order on SP, but so do all those auto-rack freight cars... SUPER CHIEF is overloaded, and Santa Fe will not run 2nd section. Paul Rayton found it sold out at least a week in advance in late July, with waiting lists. Because of this, Amtrak will put the CITY OF S.F. on a daily schedule starting in December in hopes of siphoning off some of the Chicago-L.A. traffic to Chicago-S.F. But Amtrak! The two cities are a day apart! ... HIGHBALL, RTN's new discovery for source of passenger train news, is monthly newsletter of Old Dominion Chapter, NRHS. Send $3.00 to latter for a year. Address 1012 Stillwell Rd., Richmond, VA 23226. Mention RTN ... STEVE FARRAR reports in HIGHBALL that many SR trains are running as mixed trains... MEMORIAL DAY weekend, CITY OF S.F. eastbound had problems on the Hill. Reader says: "SP pulled an SD45 off a TOFC-auto rack train at Colfax to help 102 over the hill when one of the F7's had crumped out. I could almost hear screams of anguish from the 8th floor at 1 Market Street"... WILL AMTRAK want B&O sleepers Allegheny, Cuyahoga, Opequon, Schuykill, Shenandoah, Tyart, Dana, Metcalf, & Wawassee? asks reader Michael Martino. Says they're probably best cars he's ridden, that even Paul Rayton would like them for their cleanliness and interior freshness... MANY FAMILIES riding trains for 1st time, at least recently. Conversations overheard in lounge: "Mommy, who will drive?" "The engineer." "But where is he?" and "Now be sure to tell Mommy when you have to go potty"... SIERRA RAILROAD dinner excursion using SP diner sold out both dates, July 31 & Aug. 21, so will run a third Aug. 28. Info from Great Western Tours, 495 Geary, San Francisco 94102... LITTLE STEAM train at San Francisco zoo since 1925 will be gone after May, replaced by a longer, non-steam run...

COMMUTING AND RAPID TRANSIT

NARP Announces Campaign for New Washington Commuter Trains

The National Association of Railroad Passengers says these could be running by January 1973, under the campaign for expansion and modernization it announced late in July.

NARP Executive Director Joseph Vranich wrote Sec'y John Volpe asking the DOT to form a steering committee. Because of Washington D.C.'s many political jurisdictions, "Central direction is vital if the local authorities are to avoid the pitfalls which always develop in multi-jurisdictional projects."

The new trains would operate from Gaithersburg, Md., over 21 miles of B&O tracks, to Quantico, Va., over 34.7 miles of Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac tracks, and from Baltimore to L'Enfant Plaza over 41 miles of PC tracks. A DOT study finds the project would cost not over $15.6, including rolling stock, parking and station facilities, and changes in the railroads' physical plants. The DOT could provide 2/3 of the cost if matching local funds were found.

Vranich found no opposition to the plan in discussions with Amtrak, METRO, and regional transportation officials in Maryland, Virginia, and D.C. A DOT demonstration grant would be the appropriate method of funding, said Vranich. "Attention has been paid to many phases of rail technology, but few demonstrations have considered institutional roadblocks inherent in management and operation of rail commuter systems."

He said trains and crews "would be interlined between three different railroads which for over 100 years have operated such service quite independently of each other. Such through service across a metropolitan region would be a first in commuter transport experimentation."

New York Tries to Save the 30¢ Fare

Mayor Lindsay in late June set up a panel of experts to come up with a plan for saving the 30¢ subway and bus fare. Next year the price would have to rise to 40 or 50 cents because of inflationary trends. Here's what the experts recommended: (1) a $110 million state subsidy, with $85 million to the MTA and the rest to the LIRR; (2) vehicle tolls on the four East River bridges now toll-free, and toll increases in Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority tolls. The panel wants a special session of the Legislature to consider its plan, altho a similar plan failed in the regular session of the Legislature.

Railfan Examines Russian Mass Transit Facilities

Oakland Tribune transportation writer Harre Demoro is one of 11 Americans now touring Russia for 16 days to look at its transportation facilities.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK ***

"...from my own standpoint as a railroad executive, I would like to see Southern Pacific with the right and the ability to go out and expand its trucking operations on an unrestricted basis, and to get further into the pipeline business, and to perhaps get into the inland waterway transportation business and certainly into the active airline business."

--SP President B.F. Biaggini interviewed on KQED-TV, San Francisco, July 27

"If America had trains like Japan's, you could sit back and watch the miles click by at a rate of one every 28 seconds. You could make it from New York to Boston in little more than an hour and a half. Or to Washington in about the same time. Even out to Detroit or Chicago would take less than an afternoon."

--From a Sumitomo Metal Industries ad, Fortune Magazine, August

"If Amtrak is to gain public confidence and acceptance--and convince observers that it plans to stay in business and not merely serve as a passenger train euthanasia plan--it must commence immediately to build its own organization and operate in a businesslike fashion."

--NARP newsletter editorial, July

"Anyone can crusade for the recycling of telephone directories, or the planting of more cork oaks as breeding grounds for the Spanish Imperial Eagle or the prohibition of facial-tissue dispensers from motel bathrooms. I have chosen to crusade for Amtrak. This, you must admit, takes courage and a bit of the plunger's passion for the long shot. ... Perhaps by the time we have done all we can for Amtrak, it will be ready to do something for us."

--Jack Newcombe, Life Magazine, August 6

"...a truly sensitive person just could not stand to ride to New York on the Penn Central railroad."

--Charles A. Reich: THE GREENING OF AMERICA

"Most of the criticism of New York's public transportation system is inaccurate. The subways and commuter trains are far worse than critics say."

--Harre Demoro, Oakland Tribune, writing from New York, August 8

"The PCC streetcar can go a hell of a lot faster than they have ever gone here, if the trackage is suitable and the signal system is up to date."

--Dick Nolan, S.F. Examiner, August 1

THE FRASER RIVER BLUES

By George Hyko

An unforgettable rail experience that I'd like to experience again and again happened two Summers ago when Great Northern still ran its INTERNATIONAL between Vancouver, British Columbia, and Seattle, Washington.

It was a gray June day, and a slow rain was just beginning. We'd just left Vancouver and were starting to cross the Fraser River, going very slowly over the narrow railroad bridge. Our coach, with small, heavily tinted shadeless windows, was full. Suddenly the sound of a couple of guitars gently pierced our consciousness. We were compelled to investigate its source.

At the rear of the coach was a separate room, I guess designed to be a sort of smoking lounge. A group of young people sat around, gently playing and listening to the music. It was a wistful sort of melody that emerged. It seemed to be exactly matched to the mood of the moment--the slow, gray day, the end of an eventful trip in the lovely land of our northern neighbor, perhaps even the feeling of returning to one's own domestic problems. Sort of sad, yet strangely pleasant, the memory of this little incident keeps returning.

Somehow it summed up much of what is very human and very fine about train travel. I know of no other way that the particular set of events could come about--the hypnotic combination of the slow departure from the scene of a pleasant vacation, the scene moving by outside the window as we cross the gray river, the sharing in music and company of all the feelings stirred up by our trip away from our mother country.

Long live young musicians in train lounges!

CAPTAIN AMTRACK SAYS:

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For back issues, send 25¢ per copy, or $1.00 for any five, to the same address as above. Some back issues are in short supply. We hope to publish more details soon about the availability of all back issues.